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A description of the first year of operation (1957-58) of the Leadership Training Project of the North Central Association. During the year, 15 associates, selected from the staffs of the member higher education institutions in the North Central area, participated in a conference, a series of field trips, and a summer workshop—all planned to broaden the participants' knowledge of American higher education and to develop their skills as consultants. The program is essentially a post-doctoral in-service program designed to advance skills of people who have already displayed significant ability in college and university administration.

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A Regional Accrediting Agency Experiments in the Training of Consultants for Higher Educational Institutions

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FURTHER evidence of the emphasis that regional accrediting agencies are placing on their role of service to American higher education is reflected in one of the most recent projects of the Commission on Colleges and Universities of the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. The commission has just completed the first year of a field program for the training of college consultants.

Officially designated the Leadership Training Project, the program is being carried on under a Carnegie Foundation grant and is being guided by the commission's Committee on Leadership Training and Studies. During the first year fifteen associates selected from the staffs of the member higher educational institutions in the North Central area have participated in a conference, a series of field trips, and a summer workshop, all planned to broaden their knowledge of the American higher educational scene and to develop their skills as consultants. The program is unique in higher education in that it is essentially a postdoctoral in-service program designed to advance the skills of persons who have already displayed significant ability in college and university administration.

The Leadership Training Project grew out of a series of proposals of the Committee on Planning of the Commission on Colleges and Universities. The Com-

mittee on Planning was one of three committees appointed in 1953 to develop ways of expanding and improving the services of the commission to its member colleges and universities. The other two committees, the Committee on Professional Education and the Committee on Reorganization of Accrediting Procedures, studied and developed, respectively, plans for working cooperatively with professional accrediting agencies and for changing the structural organization of the commission. The Committee on Planning directed its attention to developing ways for encouraging educational growth among member institutions.

By 1953 the North Central Association had achieved a higher educational membership of almost four hundred colleges and universities. In gaining accredited status these institutions had achieved a certain minimum standard of educational quality. The commission was well aware that it would have to continue to perform an accrediting function; institutions would still be seeking accreditation in the future and many member institutions would have to be re-examined when they advanced their programs to another degree level.

At the same time, the commission had become convinced that the time had come to shift attention from a process which assured the maintenance of minimum performance to one which would

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stimulate maximum constant improvement. This meant, in the words of the first report of the Committee on Planning, "the continuous re-examination of the aims, the teaching, and the other features of the institution's life with the purpose of adapting them more closely to the needs of the students in attendance at any particular time."

As the Committee on Planning proceeded in its deliberations it envisioned several ways in which this concern for educational growth might be advanced. The Commission on Colleges and Universities could provide consultant service on various aspects of institutional operation. It could plan and supervise a continuing and systematically conducted program of studies of significant problems facing institutions of higher education. It could organize a clearinghouse for channeling to member institutions various kinds of information that would help them in their own growth and development.

The Committee on Planning was convinced that continuing improvement could not be achieved by handing down recommendations and procedures from some central office. Improvement has to be soundly based upon an institution's inner perceptions of its own problems and upon concerted efforts within to apply available resources to the solution of these problems. It was for this reason that the committee focused its attention on ways of involving the staffs of institutions in self-evaluation and inter-institutional studies. It seemed clear that one of the keys to this approach was the provision of consultant services.

The committee saw consultant services as being roughly of two types: (1) the services of specialists in subject areas and in curriculum, finance, business management, planning, student counseling, the library, and the like; and (2) the services of "generalists," persons with a broad grasp of higher education and

insight into the interrelations of the various elements in a higher institution, persons who could help an institution conceive and carry out a general self-study.

A proposal embodying the thinking of the Committee on Planning was formulated. This proposal included plans for the development of consultant services, the conduct of studies, and the organization of a clearinghouse. Together with the proposals of the other two committees appointed in 1953, it was taken before the higher educational membership of the North Central Association in eleven regional meetings held during the academic year 1954-55.

The program outlined by the Committee on Planning was favorably received by the membership. The proposal for the development of consultant services was particularly well received, and the committee decided that it should turn its efforts at first in the direction of developing a program for the training of consultants. It was further the opinion of the committee that it should concentrate upon the education of consultants of the "generalist type."

It was clear that, in the initial stages at least, a program for the training of consultants would require some kind of subvention. Accordingly a proposal for the in-service training of consultants for higher educational institutions was formulated.

In the winter of 1956, the Carnegie Corporation of New York made a grant of \$147,000 to the North Central Association for a four-year project. A Committee on Leadership Training and Studies was set up to guide the program. The new committee consisted of: President Clarence Hilberry, Wayne State University (chairman); Provost Harvey H. Davis, State University of Iowa; President John R. Emens, Ball State Teachers College; Dean Blair Stewart, Oberlin College; and President Charles J. Turck,

Macalester College. Dr. Floyd W. Reeves, professor of educational administration and consultant to the president, Michigan State University, agreed to serve as chief consultant to the project. In addition to Dr. Reeves, the committee secured the counsel of two other widely known leaders in the field of higher education: Dr. A. J. Brumbaugh, then associate director for university studies, Southern Regional Education Board, and Dr. Ruth Eckert, professor of higher education, University of Minnesota. Dr. Norman Burns, professor of education at the University of Chicago and secretary of the Commission on Colleges and Universities, agreed to be director of the project, and the writer became assistant director.

Plans for the first year of the project were drawn up in June 1957. These plans called for a two-day conference in the fall, this to be followed by five one-week field visits, and the program to conclude with a one- or two-week workshop the following summer.

The Committee on Leadership Training and Studies then circularized the entire higher educational membership of the North Central Association and requested nominations for the first group of participants. Over one hundred nominations were received, and from this group fifteen men were selected for the first year of the program. A general idea of the range and scope of the qualifications of these men may be indicated by the following list of their names and positions at the time of selection:

Edward B. Blackman, assistant to the dean of the Basic College, Michigan State University

Denmar A. Cope, administrative assistant to the president, Kansas State Teachers College

Kenneth R. Doane, head of Education Department, Hamline University

Richard J. Doney, assistant dean, College of Liberal Arts, Northwestern University

A. Peter Fraenkel, assistant to the president, Indiana University

Stanley J. Heywood, assistant to the president and registrar, Coe College

John E. Horner, assistant to the president, director of academically related activities, Municipal University of Omaha

Paul G. Jenson, chairman of the Department of Psychology, Macalester College

Howard G. Johnshoy, dean of student affairs, Ball State Teachers College

James R. Jordan, director of university relations, State University of Iowa

James P. McCormick, assistant to the vice-president for academic administration, Wayne State University

John E. Stecklein, director, Bureau of Institutional Research, Univ. of Minnesota

Allen E. Tuttle, dean, College of Arts and Sciences, Valparaiso University

Reverend John E. Walsh, C.S.C., head of Department of Education, University of Notre Dame

David W. Weiser, dean of faculty, Shimer College

The institutions nominating the participants, or associates, as they have been designated, agreed to release them during the academic year for the forty or fifty days that would be required of them. In the meantime, the associates were to maintain their institutional affiliation, spending approximately one week out of each month in a special field experience designed as part of the project. Each group of associates was to spend one year in the Leadership Training Project.

The first meeting of the 1957-58 group was a three-day conference at Chicago in November 1957. This conference was designed to orient the associates to the general objectives of the project and to introduce them to the scope and nature of the work of the North Central Association and to some of the significant on-going projects in American higher education. Time was also provided for working out the details of the first field experience.

During the months that followed, each

of the associates participated as a member of a three-man team in five one-week visits to institutions in the North Central area. The rationale behind the field experiences was that only through direct and systematic work with operating institutions could the associates develop the skills and insights required of an effective consultant. The trips were spaced approximately three weeks apart to avoid taking the associates away from their own institutions for too long a period and to allow time for a maturing of impressions. This spacing could not always be maintained because of inevitable problems of scheduling, but it was employed whenever possible. Thus, associates conducted an intensive study of an institution for a week, returned to their own campuses for two or three weeks, then went out on another field trip; the process was repeated five times.

Since the object of the project is to prepare persons to be generalist consultants—persons who will have an over-all grasp of the structure and work of higher educational institutions—each of the associates visited five different kinds of institutions.

On the first field trip the associates assumed the role of observers in a regular accrediting examination of an applying institution. The second field trip was to a member junior college, and the third was to a member liberal arts college. During the fourth round of visits some of the team members went to tax-supported state institutions, and some went to municipal institutions. The last of the field trips took the teams to five different complex universities. Apart from the first, or accrediting visit, there was no question about the accredited status of the institutions visited; all institutions participating in the last four rounds were members of the North Central Association in good standing. The twenty colleges and universities involved in these latter rounds had volunteered to

assist the project by inviting teams to their campuses.

Recognizing that a mark of a good consultant is his ability to work with a variety of persons under a variety of circumstances, the Committee on Leadership Training and Studies decided to change the composition of each of the associate teams for each of the visits after the first two. In this way each of the associates had an opportunity to work with a different set of team members for the last three visits. The associates could exchange experiences and help further each other's education.

On each of the visits the associates were accompanied by a supervisor, a person holding a responsible position in one of the member colleges or universities of the North Central Association and experienced in consulting and in directing institutional evaluation. The intent of this provision was to bring the associates into contact with experienced college and university officers in an intensive learning experience. The supervisor became both the general director of the field trip and a seminar leader for a field seminar on higher education. He arranged a conference before the visit for the purpose of reviewing materials provided by the institution to be visited and making plans for the visit. On the visit itself he helped the team organize its activities, acted as stimulator, raised questions, and forced the associates to examine their own procedures. The associates were constantly observing and studying the institution as well as their own approaches to this process of observing and studying. Considerable flexibility was allowed the supervisor in interpreting his own role in the process. Supervisors spent varying periods of time with the associates; some arrived with the team and some came later during the visit.

In the accrediting visits the associates could only act as observers. During the other visits, however, the team members

engaged in a variety of activities. Apart from the general direction given by the supervisors, the teams organized their own activities. In each visit their goal was to understand the institution, its purposes, its organization and administration, its success in carrying out its objectives, its problems, and its plans for the future. Five days were allowed for each on-campus study. The actual time spent varied from three to five days. Additional time was required for the pre-visit conference and for preparing a report of the impressions gained during the visit.

While each field trip differed from the others, most of the trips took on the characteristics of an over-all survey of the institutional program. In a number of instances the associates followed this over-all survey with an investigation of special programs and activities on the campus. Some of the visits were combined with the on-going program, adopted in April 1957, of the North Central Association for reviewing all member institutions. In the combined review and training visits the associates were joined by two commissioners as well as a supervisor. Under these circumstances the associates typically arrived on the campus one or two days before the commissioners and supervisor, made a general evaluation of the program, reported to the commissioners and supervisor on their arrival, and continued the rest of the study as a combined team.

While the associates went to each campus in the role of learners, they soon found that an important by-product of their visit was considerable direct assistance to the institution in pointing up significant problems and issues. Every effort was made to allow the visit to be as realistic a consultant situation as possible. The associates spent time conferring with faculty members and students. They met with the administrative officers at the beginning and at the conclusion

of each visit. They spoke to and worked with faculty and student committees. Frequently they were invited to present their impressions of the institution to an administrative council or to the faculty as a whole. Following each visit each team prepared a written report of its impressions. This report was forwarded to the institution for its own use.

The Leadership Training Project has now completed the first year of its field program. During the first week of August 1958, the 1957-58 associates, members of the Committee on Leadership Training and Studies, the consultants, and the staff of the project met at the Kellogg Center in East Lansing, Michigan, to review the 1957-58 program and to consider plans for the next year.

The first two days of the week were given to discussions of basic issues in higher education, such as: institutional responsiveness to the demands of the clientele, intellectual climate of a campus, faculty participation in institutional policy determination, unity and diversity, and institutional self-study. Holding consistently to the principle that the associates should be as directly involved in the program as possible, the Committee on Leadership Training and Studies asked that the associates themselves act as discussion leaders for each of the topics. The results were exceedingly happy. The associates drew deeply from their experiences of the year, and in the eyes of the consultants to the project the first two days constituted one of the finest examples of a consistently high-level seminar on American higher education. Subsequent days of the week were devoted to a consideration of the role of the consultant, a review of some of the recent research in higher education, and a careful evaluation of the conduct of the project itself.

While it is difficult to assess the impact of participation in the year's program on the individual associates, there

was at the end of the week general agreement among the members of the Committee on Leadership Training and Studies and the consultants to the project on the following points:

1. The associates revealed a broad understanding of the variety of instructional programs characterizing American higher education. They were able to deal perceptively with the differences in institutional approach to higher education and to discuss with understanding the issues facing American colleges and universities. The associates themselves reported that participation in the program introduced them to facets of higher education with which they had previously had little or no acquaintance. For example, most of the associates had prior to this time had very little direct contact with junior colleges. In their team visits to junior colleges they became intimately involved in assessing the nature and strengths of the junior college program. Even when they studied institutions similar to those with which they were affiliated they found that they uncovered new ideas and relationships that could be revealed only in a systematic study of an institution. They were forced to look at each part of an institution in terms of the whole.

2. The associates in their discussions revealed an appreciation of the kinds of problems facing different types of higher educational institutions. They had become sensitized to movements, ideas, and points of view regarding the task of higher education in America.

3. The associates spoke of a deepened appreciation of the role of the consultant. They raised questions about approaches to be taken, and they revealed a concern for developing the skills needed in working effectively with faculty committees and study groups.

The associates mentioned other outcomes, such as increased skill in analyzing

institutional programs, the broadening of friendships with persons similarly concerned with institutional evaluation and growth, and a general widening of outlook. All were convinced that the year had been a profitable one.

Out of the week's conference the Committee on Leadership Training and Studies derived a number of helpful suggestions for the development of the 1958-59 program. One problem especially had caused the committee considerable concern: how could the project provide at the same time experiences in both depth and breadth? The committee emphasized in the 1957-58 program experiences that contributed to the development of some breadth in understanding the diversity of program in American higher education. At the same time the committee had felt that the associates should have opportunities to probe deeply into certain problems and developments. Eight to ten months hardly provide the time to do both jobs.

The committee began to resolve this problem by looking upon the program for any one group of associates as extending beyond the one year of formal affiliation with the project. If the first year may be viewed as a more structured approach to a study of diversity in American higher education and of the role of the consultant, the subsequent year (or years) may be given to less formal activities which allow the associates to develop more depth of experience in those areas in which they feel the need for further training. The Committee on Leadership Training and Studies has begun to work through means whereby those associates who wish to continue their training beyond the first year in this less formal manner may be able to do so.

In the meantime the committee is proceeding with the selection of the new group of associates. At the time of this writing it is expected that the 1958-59

group will consist of fifteen associates as did the 1957-58 group. The general organization of the program will follow the pattern set during the first year, with two important exceptions. The first exception is that the associates will have four rounds of visits instead of five. However, between the second and third visits the associates and supervisors will be brought together for a special midway workshop, during which they will have an opportunity to exchange experiences and work out plans for the last two rounds of visits.

The other exception is that the staffs of the institutions to be visited will be more directly involved in the preparations for the visit. It is expected that each institution will appoint a liaison committee to work closely with the supervisor and associates prior to and during the visit. In this way not only will the training experience be more effective, but the institution itself will derive greater value from the work of the associates.

During the coming year, efforts will also be made to study more closely the processes involved in the training of consultants. The activities of the 1958-59 associates as well as the work of the

1957-58 group will be followed closely to determine which procedures seem especially appropriate to a training program of this type. Such a study may result in generalizations that will be applicable not only to the training of college consultants but other types of consultants as well.

One final note should be added. The program is designated "Leadership Training Project"; yet it is obviously directed to the training of consultants. What is the relationship between the training of consultants and the development of leaders? The Committee on Leadership Training and Studies has taken the approach that it has because it believes that the skills developed by the effective consultant are invaluable to the educational leader. The consultant must have a broad knowledge of the enterprise with which he is working; he must be able to see it as a whole. He must be able to work effectively with various groups within the enterprise. He must understand their problems and must be able to help them direct their energies toward the accomplishment of their objectives. The effective leader must be able to do all of these things.